

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE DELIVERED BEFORE THE  
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND THE CITIZENS  
OF HARTFORD 26<sup>th</sup> DAY OF DECEMBER, 1843 DAY

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HISTORICAL DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

AND THE

CITIZENS OF HARTFORD,

ON THE

Evening of the 26th day of December, 1843.

BY THOMAS DAY,

PRESIDENT OF THE CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND OF WADSWORTH  
ATHENÆUM.

HARTFORD:

PRESS OF CASE, TIFFANY AND BURNHAM.

1844.





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HISTORICAL DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Connecticut Historical Society,

AND THE

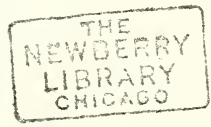
CITIZENS OF HARTFORD,

ON THE

*Evening of the 26th December, 1813.*

BY THOMAS DAY,

President of the Connecticut Historical Society and of Wadsworth Athenaeum.



HARTFORD.

CASE, TIFFANY & BURNHAM, PRINTERS,

Pearl-street, corner of Trumbull.

1811.



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Day, Thomas, 1777-1855.

A historical discourse, delivered before the Connecticut historical society, and the citizens of Hartford, on the evening of the 26th day of December, 1843. [Hartford, 1844]

SHED CARD

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At a meeting of the CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, January 2d, 1844:

*Voted*, That the thanks of this Society be presented to Hon. THOMAS DAY, President of the Society, for his very interesting historical address, delivered to the Society, on the 26th of December, 1843, upon the occasion of their occupying, for the first time, the rooms in WADSWORTH ATHENÆUM, recently prepared for their reception; and that he be requested to furnish a copy of the same for the use of the Society.

A true copy,

Attest.—

CHARLES HOSMER, *Recording Secretary*.

5906



## PREFATORY NOTE.

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THE following remarks were prepared at the request of THE CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, and were originally designed as an address to the members of that Institution, on the occasion of their taking possession of the rooms in WADSWORTH ATHENÆUM destined for their use. About the same time, the Society proposed to give a series of historical lectures to the citizens of Hartford; and the committee charged with that business applied to me to commence the series. It occurred to me, that a subject adapted to one occasion would not be inappropriate to the other; and I concluded to make this two-fold application of the subject I had in preparation; and thus the address and the lecture became identified. The Society first met, on the evening of the 26th of December, 1843, in the south division of the Athenæum; and thence proceeded, shortly afterwards, to the lecture-room of the First Congregational Society, a few rods distant, on the opposite side of the street, where the contents of the following pages were addressed to a numerous and highly respectable assembly, consisting of the members of the Connecticut Historical Society, and the ladies and gentlemen of Hartford.

The facts stated in the narrative have been cautiously taken from authentic sources, generally based upon evidence such as would be admissible and satisfactory in a judicial proceeding. In preparing

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the discourse for publication, I have referred to the authorities, in all cases where it was practicable and desirable; and these cases embrace the most important facts; but in a few instances, where the facts were derived from entries in old bibles which were private property, from monumental inscriptions, to which but few persons could have access, or from oral communications or personal knowledge, it seemed hardly practicable, and useless as impracticable, to refer to the authorities. When I have had occasion to refer to the records of the *United Colonies of New England*, I have referred to them as printed in *Hazard's Historical Collections*.

The names of the several proprietors of the Athenæum lot, when first introduced, are printed in small capitals.

T. D.



## HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

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MEMBERS OF THE CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

GREAT and manifold are the uses of history. To say that it connects the past with the present, is to say the truth ; but it is not *all* the truth. It brings forward the accumulated treasures of the past, and gives them present existence. It makes the experience and wisdom of by-gone ages our own. Of the future we know nothing ; of the present, not much more—as the present becomes past before we can garner its fruits. The great store-house of human knowledge, therefore, lies in the dominions of the past. History is the common carrier that brings it to us. As well might we expect to enjoy the benefits of foreign commerce, without ships, as to appropriate the acquisitions of past generations, without history.

But it is not my present purpose to dwell upon the benefits of history generally. This topic, with its wide-spread ramifications, so full of dignity and interest, may be illustrated, by an abler hand, on some other occasion ; and the time could rarely happen in connexion with any stated or extraordinary meeting of this society, when such a topic would be inappropriate. What I wish particularly to call your attention to, now, is, the desire so universally prevalent of knowing more or less of the history of the persons and things most intimately connected with ourselves. This desire is manifested in early childhood. Give your little boy a toy, and, as soon as it is *his*, much as he values it, he will break it, to find out what is in it, and how it was made ;—in other words, to learn its history. This desire increases with advancing age ; and gradually amplifies its scope to take in the multifarious objects that are continually springing up before it. This desire is a laudable one. It



is dignified in its nature ; and not only innocent, but positively beneficent, in its tendency and results. It emanated from the same divine spirit as the unquenchable thirst of immortality. It is, indeed, "of the eternal" a "co-eternal beam."

The commencement of this course of historical lectures is cotemporaneous with the opening for our use of yonder castellated edifice, whose apartments are destined to become "storied halls" with "trophied arches;" our society having met this evening, for the first time, in the division appropriated to our use. Under the influence of the spirit alluded to, let us cast a retrospective glance at some of the objects immediately connected with such an occasion : I refer particularly to the structure spoken of, and the ground on which it is erected.

Following the natural order, let us then, in the first place, enquire what title we have to the land thus occupied ; for it much concerns us to know, whether we are rightfully in possession, or trespassers. Can we truly and confidently say to all adverse claimants—*Hæc mea sunt*?

It is familiar history with those whom I address, that the first permanent settlers of Hartford came here in 1635 ; that having been admitted freemen in Massachusetts, they, on their arrival here, organized themselves as a municipal corporation ; and that the next important step was, to procure from the original proprietors a title to the land within their corporate limits. Accordingly, upon the application of Samuel Stone and William Goodwin, in behalf of themselves and their associates, SUNKQUASSON, (a) Sachem of Sukiange, and grand-proprietor of the lands in that sachemdom, with the consent of his adult subjects, in the year 1636, granted to such applicants, for the use of themselves and their associates, by a written instrument under his hand, for a satisfactory consideration by him received, all the land

(a) The name of this chieftain, like most Indian names, is variously spelled. Winthrop spells it, in one instance, *Sequasson*, and in another, *Sequashin*. 2 *Winth. N. E.* 125. 332. (Sav. ed.) Trumbull spells it, uniformly, *Se-quassen*; and it is generally so spelled in the records of the United Colonies.





between Wethersfield bounds on the South and Windsor bounds on the North, and extending, the whole breadth, from Connecticut river on the East, six large miles into the wilderness on the West. This grant was afterwards, upon the desire of Mr. Haynes and the other authorities of the town, and upon a further consideration paid, renewed and enlarged, by the same aboriginal patriarch. In a succeeding age, after he had gone to his final rest, [1670] it was fully confirmed, by his successors, on their receiving a further gratification nearly equivalent to the original value of the land. (")

The first notice of Sunckquasson, furnished by our records, after his original grant to the Hartford planters, is under date of July 2d, 1640, when he appeared before the Particular Court, and testified, that he never sold any ground to the Dutch; neither was at any time conquered by the Pequots, nor paid any tribute to them. The object of this testimony probably was, to repel the claim of our Dutch neighbours of the Manhattoes to any part of the land embraced in the above-mentioned grant.

Sunckquasson was a relative of Miantonomo, chief Sachem of the Narragansets, and one of his peculiar favourites; and the well-known hostility of the patron towards Uncas, Sachem of the Mohegans, was readily infused into the heart of the protégé. Uncas was not backward to reciprocate the sentiment, whenever a suitable occasion presented itself. Such an occasion occurred in 1643. Sunckquasson's men had killed a principal Indian belonging to Uncas; and shortly afterwards, Uncas himself having been up Connecticut river, on his return, was way-laid and shot at with arrows, by Sunckquasson, or some of his warriors. Uncas

1 *Trum. Hist. Con.* 129, 161. 2 *Haz. Hist. Col. passim.* In the records of the Colony of Connecticut, July 2d, 1610, it is written *Saqweston*. 1 *Col. Rec.* 49. And in the Hartford Town records, under date of January, 1643, it is written *Soaquasen*. 1 *Hart. Town Rec.* 25. But in the Indian deed of confirmation, as it appears upon the public records, it is written *Sunckquasson*; (1 *Col. Rec.* 390, 1.) and this orthography I have adopted, because it is supported by equal authority, and is, I think, favoured by analogy.

(a) 1 *Col. Rec.* 390, 1.



thereupon required that six of Sunckquasson's men should be delivered to him for the murder of his man, because he was a great man. Governor Haynes and the Court interposed their offices to dissuade Uncas from insisting on this demand; and he at length reluctantly consented to accept of the murderer only. But Sunckquasson would not agree to deliver him. Uncas then gave him battle, and obtained a victory over him, killing seven or eight of his men, wounding thirteen, burning his wigwam and carrying away the booty. (a)

The next passage of much importance in the life of Sunckquasson, which has come to our knowledge, relates to his concern in what Dr. Trumbull calls "a horrid plot concerted among the Indians for the destruction of a number of the principal inhabitants of Hartford." (b) This transaction, whatever was its real character, took place in the Spring of 1646; and was brought before the Commissioners of the United Colonies, at their session at New Haven, in September of that year, upon the representation of Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Haynes, charging Sunckquasson with a murderous design against themselves and Mr. Whiting. Mr. Haynes had twice sent in vain to Sunckquasson, who was then at Warrinoke, [Westfield] to answer to this charge; but he, instead of coming to clear himself, chose to remain where he was. The Commissioners, considering the premises, thought fit to send for him again, with safe-conduct under their hands; and accordingly gave instructions to Jonathan Gilbert, to repair, with all convenient speed, to Warrinoke, and having obtained opportunity to speak with Sunckquasson, to give him to understand, that he and some others were accused, by a certain Indian some time residing with him, of a plot and conspiracy, entered into by them, for the killing of Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Haynes and Mr. Whiting; and that the Commissioners, being very desirous to understand the truth or falsehood of the premises, tendered to him an

(a) 2 *Winth. N. E.* 128, 9. (*Sav. ed.*) 2 *Haz. Hist. Col.* 9. 1 *Trum. Hist. Conn.* 129.

(b) 1 *Trum. Hist. Conn.* 161.



open and impartial hearing before them, at their place of meeting in New Haven, in the presence of his accuser, who held himself ready to make good his accusation. The messenger went to the place where he understood Sunckquasson was; but could not get access to him so as to speak with him; and of course, returned without him. But a few days afterwards, two Sagamores, with other Indians, came to New Haven, and informed the Commissioners, that they were friends of Sunckquasson, and had been with him in Massachusetts; that having respect for the English, they had brought him down to clear himself; that while one of them held him by one arm, and the other by the other arm, when he was near New Haven, almost at the town fence, he broke from them, and disappeared, alleging that he was ashamed to go before the Commissioners, because he had brought them no present. The Commissioners declared, that they would not accept of any present from him, if tendered; neither should the want of it prejudice his cause. They then proceeded to an *ex parte* examination of his accuser, who testified, through an interpreter, that Sunckquasson had, the Spring before, proposed to him to go to Hartford, and kill Mr. Hopkins, Mr. Haynes or Mr. Whiting; that he was to give it out, that Uncas had hired him to do this deed, which would set the English against Uncas; and that he and Sunckquasson would then fly together to the Mohawks: that Sunckquasson thereupon gave him some wampum, and promised to give him much more: that the witness told Sunckquasson it was dangerous to kill an English Sachem; and calculating that the favour of the English, which he would obtain, by a discovery of the plot, would be better to him than Sunckquasson's wampum, with the fear and danger attending it, he declined the offer, and immediately came to Hartford, and informed against Sunckquasson. (a)

Winthrop tells the story somewhat differently. He says, that information was given to the Commissioners, that

(a) 2 *Haz. Hist. Col.* 59-61.





Sunckquasson would have hired an Indian to kill some of the magistrates of Hartford; whereupon he was sent for, but came not; that they then sent for Uncas, who undertook to fetch him in, which not being able to do by open force, he surprised him in the night, and brought him to Hartford, where he was kept in prison divers weeks. "But," Winthrop adds, "there not being sufficient proof to convict him, he was discharged." (b) Winthrop was probably misinformed as to the arrest and imprisonment of Sunckquasson; but that the Commissioners did not consider the proof sufficient to convict him, or to justify any further proceedings against him, is unquestionably true.

After this, Sunckquasson lived on terms of so much favour with our government as to excite the apprehension of Capt. Mason, the friend and neighbour of Uncas, as well as one of the pillars of the colony, that he was held in too high consideration. Capt. Mason accordingly wrote a letter to the General Court sitting at Hartford, in October, 1651, expressing his dissatisfaction at Sunckquasson's being exalted, under our power, to great sachemship. The Court, however, declared, that they did not know of any such thing; neither did they, or should they, allow or approve thereof. (c) It was their policy to pursue a course of impartial neutrality between these hostile chieftains; and to this policy they adhered as strictly as the circumstances in which they were placed in relation to them respectively, would admit of.

Notwithstanding the hatred subsisting between Sunckquasson and Uncas, it was not so inveterate as to prevent their uniting against a common foe. In 1656, a young Indian having killed a Sachem of Connecticut, dwelling at Mattabeset, [Middletown] allied to Sunckquasson, the aggressor fled to the Podunk Indians, who entertained and maintained him, as Sunckquasson alleged, *against all justice*. In this emergency, Sunckquasson resorted to Uncas "for help to be revenged for the said Sachem's death." Uncas, being at that time enraged with the Podunks, for sundry wrongs which they

(b) 2 *Winth. N. E.* 332, 3. (Sar. ed.)

(c) 2 *Col. Rec.* 21.





had previously done him, especially in protecting a murderer, who had fled from him to them, readily joined with Sunckquasson in a complaint to the magistrates of Connecticut for redress. The magistrates thereupon ordered, that the Sachems of both sides should appear before the General Court at Hartford; and they appeared accordingly. Sunckquasson stated his case. The Governor asked the complainants what satisfaction they required? They pressed hard to have ten men, friends of the murderer, who, they said, was a mean fellow, [*i.e.* a common man,] put to death. The Podunk Sachem said, this was unjust; because the Sachem that was slain, had murdered the young man's uncle. They therefore proposed to give wampium, by way of satisfaction. This was wholly rejected. After some time spent by the Court, in persuading the parties to make peace, the complainants agreed to be satisfied with the death of six men. This offer was also rejected. The Court again interposed. The Governor stated to them, that by our law, only the murderer, and his accomplices, could be punished; and pressed the Podunks to deliver up the murderer in this case. They suggested that his friends were so many and so potent within the fort, that they could not deliver him up; but finally, Totannimo, their Sachem, promised to do it. A committee of the Court then addressed Uncas privately, and persuaded him to accept of this satisfaction. But Totannimo, acting with punic faith, stole out of Court, and returned to Podunk fort. This offended both the English and the Indians, who agreed to send a messenger to take the murderer, and deliver him up.<sup>(a)</sup> What success this messenger had, the record does not inform us. Probably he consulted his own safety, by eschewing Podunk fort.

These are the most interesting incidents in the life of this savage chieftain, which history has preserved. The memory of Uncas has been illustrated, even in our day, by a stately monument, erected on the soil which was once his own; but not even a rude head-stone has ever told us where the bones of Sunckquasson repose. He, and his subjects, and their



descendants, have vanished from his dominions. May not the majestic pile across the street, standing on the soil over which he once bore sway, constitute his cenotaph!

The first settlers, as we have seen, organized as a municipal corporation, fairly purchased the lands within their borders of the original proprietors; paid them for such lands an adequate consideration; and received from them authentic muniments of title. They are now tenants in common of these lands. Not being imbued with the social theories of a later age, they proceed immediately to a partial division, subject to certain conditions which the public good required. The allotment of each individual is equitably apportioned, in quantity and value, to the amount of purchase money paid by him. Of every allotment a parcel of ground eligibly situated for a homestead, comprising from half an acre to three acres, is an essential part.<sup>(a)</sup> The distribution being made, the several parts allotted to each inhabitant are entered together upon a book kept for that purpose in the town-clerk's office;<sup>(b)</sup> such entry being the consummating act in conferring a title in severalty.

The original distribution of the lands in Hartford among the inhabitants, included a tract lying North of the Little river, between what are now Front and Main streets. The most Easterly part, comprising two acres, bordering upon the flats, or "little meadow," as it was then called, was allotted to Richard Webb, and by him sold to John Haynes, the first chief magistrate of the young community.<sup>(c)</sup> Adjoining to to this on the West, was the homestead of the Rev. Thomas Hooker, a man not less considerable in moral, than his neighbour was in political power. This also comprised two acres.<sup>(d)</sup> Adjoining to this on the West, was the domestic residence of that "lesser light" of the church, the Rev. Samuel Stone, comprising the same quantity.<sup>(e)</sup> The Southern part of the neighbourhood was then completed,

(a) 1 *Hart. Town Rec. passim*.

(b) This book is entitled "*Original Distribution of the Town of Hartford among the Settlers*, 1639."

(c) *Orig. Dist.* 1. 40.

(d) *Id.* 328.

(e) *Id.* 375.



by giving the remaining parcel, lying West of Mr. Stone's and East of the highway, (now Main Street) comprising just three acres, to Elder WILLIAM GOODWIN.<sup>(c)</sup> These four neighbours, thus located together, and separated from the other members of their community, on three sides, by highways, had other neighbours on the North; among whom was John Steele, one of the persons named in the Massachusetts commission, and the first town-clerk of Hartford; whose homestead, consisting of two acres, was bounded by the highway on the West, and extended Easterly through the breadth of the Goodwin and the Stone lots.<sup>(b)</sup>

We are now prepared to introduce the description, which the record gives, of one of "several parcels of land in Hartford upon the river of Connecticut, belonging to Mr. William Goodwin, Elder there in Christ's church." It is as follows: "February, A. D. 1639. One parcel on which his dwelling-house now standeth, with other out-houses, yards or gardens thereon being, containing, by estimation, three acres, more or less; abutting on the highway lying on the North side of the *Riveret*, on the South; on the highway leading from the palisado to Sentinel-hill, on the West; on Mr. Samuel Stone's land, on the East; and on John Steele's land, on the North."<sup>(c)</sup> The word "*riveret*," the diminutive of river, is here appropriately and beautifully used to distinguish this stream from Connecticut river. The "*palisado*" was on the North bank of the *riveret*, where the present Main-street crosses it; and Sentinel-hill was an eminence a little North-west of the present North Congregational church, which has since been reduced. The line dividing the Goodwin and Stone lots on the South, from the Steele lot on the North, was nearly coincident with the North side of the present way, called "*Wadsworth's alley*." The land whose history we are tracing, was, consequently, embraced in the Goodwin lot, constituting the North-west corner thereof.

Elder William Goodwin, the first proprietor in severalty of the land in question, was a prominent man among the

(a) *Orig. Dist.* 19.(b) *Id.* 461.(c) *Id.* 19.







first settlers of this commonwealth. He was admitted a freeman of Massachusetts, at Cambridge, in November, 1632; (°) and was a member of the first General Court in that province at which delegates attended, held in May, 1634; and among those delegates, his name stands first on the record. (°) Gov. Winthrop, speaking of his conduct in that General Court, describes him as "a very reverend and godly man, being the elder of the congregation of Newtown"—i. e. Cambridge. (°) Soon after his arrival here, he was commissioned to act with Mr. Stone, (as we have seen) in the important negotiation with the Indians for the purchase of their lands. He was comparatively a man of wealth. He was honoured by Gov. Hopkins, by being made a trustee in his will. (°) At the time of the dissensions in the church in 1659, he, being at the head of one of the parties, left this place, and removed, with Gov. Webster, Mr. Whiting, Mr. Cullick, and others, to Hadley, (°) and was a ruling elder in the church there. He subsequently removed to Farmington in Connecticut, where he died, in 1673. He left but one child, a daughter, named Elizabeth, who married John Crow, of Hartford, whose residence was on the East side of the Connecticut river. His name, among his descendants, thus ran out: not so, his blood. It continued to flow, and still flows, as will be seen in the course of these remarks, in veins not unworthy of their ancestry.

Before we proceed to our next link in the chain of title, it is necessary to advert to the law of Connecticut, at this period, regarding the alienation of real estate. You will probably expect me to show, in behalf of the succeeding proprietor, a deed or devise from William Goodwin, or at least a distribution or sale pursuant to a decree of probate. I can shew neither; and I maintain that neither was necessary, in order to transfer a legal title. No statute was passed, and no law existed, making a deed necessary for this purpose, until October, 1660. A sale by parol agreement,

(a) 2 *Winth. N. E.* 363. *Append.* (Sav. ed.)

(b) 1 *Winth. N. E.* 129. note. (Sav. ed.) (c) *Id.* 142.

(d) *Id.* 228, 9. note. (e) 1 *Trumb. Hist. Conn.* 310, & seq.



accompanied by the possession of the vendee and an entry of the land upon the town records as his property, gave him as perfect and valid a title, before the period referred to, as a deed executed with the formalities required by the existing law, can now give. As early as October, 1639, it was provided, by an act of the General Court, that each town should provide a ledger book, with an index, and should choose a town-clerk, who should record every man's house or lands already granted and measured out to him, with the bounds and quantity of the same; every owner was required, under a penalty, to bring in to the town-clerk a *note*, (not a *deed*) of his house and lands, with the bounds and quantity of the same, by the nearest estimation; the like to be done in relation to all lands thereafter granted and measured to any; and then it was declared, that all bargains or mortgages of lands whatsoever should be accounted of no value, until they should be recorded.<sup>(a)</sup> And we have the authority of our supreme court of errors, in the opinion delivered by Judge Trumbull, in a case before that court in 1814, for saying, that by virtue of our early statutes, the freehold of lands became vested, without livery of seisin, by a record of the title or conveyance in the public register of the town in which such lands were situated; and a grantee in possession under a title or conveyance so recorded, was not liable to be evicted, by the grantor or any other person, but had evidence of his title against all mankind.<sup>(b)</sup> It is true, that deeds were in use from the earliest period of our government. The first on record was one of the Plymouth house at Windsor, executed by William Holmes, as agent of the governor and assistants of the Plymouth Plantation, to Matthew Allyn, dated May 3d, 1638.<sup>(c)</sup> And many others of a date somewhat later, previous to the statute of 1660, are to be found on our early records.<sup>(d)</sup> But that conveyances were often—not to say generally—made, without deed; and that such conveyances, accompanied with a change of

(a) 1 Col. Rec. 30, 31.

(b) *Chalker v. Chalker*, 1 Conn. Rep. 88.

(c) 1 Col. Rec. 413.

(d) 1 Col. Rec. 413. & seq.



possession, and recorded, were effectual to transfer the title, are truths established by incontrovertible evidence.

After Elder Goodwin removed to Hadley, we find JOHN BLACKLEACH, formerly of Boston, now a merchant of enterprise and wealth in Hartford, in possession of the lot in question. What title had he to this lot? No deed of it to him can be found. But does the record shew no title in him? Let us see how it reads: "Land in Hartford upon Connecticut belonging to Mr. John Blackleach and his heirs forever. One parcel which he bought of Mr. William Goodwin, on which his dwelling-house now standeth, together with several out-houses &c. thereon being, containing, by estimation, three acres, (be it more or less) and abutteth on a highway lying on the North side of the Riveret, on the South; and on a highway leading from the palisado to the Sentinel-hill, on the West; and Mr. Samuel Stone's land, on the East; and on Jeremy Adams his land, on the North." (a) The description of the land as to quantity and boundaries, it will be perceived, is precisely the same as in the original distribution to William Goodwin, except the North line. John Steele having, in the meantime, conveyed his lot to Jeremy Adams, the present record correctly describes the premises as being bounded on the North, by his land.

It appears, then, that John Blackleach *bought* this land of William Goodwin; and that a *note* thereof, with the bounds and quantity of the same, was duly recorded. We do not yet find a broken link or flaw in the chain of title. Let us proceed.

On the 20th of June, 1661, John Blackleach, in consideration of £240 sterling, conveyed the premises, by a formal deed of that date, to his son, JOHN BLACKLEACH, JUN. of Boston. (b) [This, you will perceive, was after the statute of deeds of 1660.] The deed follows the record we have recited, in the description of the premises. The grantee, though at this time described as of Boston, was admitted

(a) *Orig. Dist.* 557.

(b) *Id.* 559.





an inhabitant of Hartford, on the 2d of September following.<sup>(a)</sup>

John Blackleach jun. held this lot until the 26th of February, 1666, when he conveyed it, by a deed containing the same description as that in the deed to him, to THOMAS WELLES, of Hartford,<sup>(b)</sup> a son of Gov. Thomas Welles.

Of this proprietor I have not been able to procure much information. It appears, that he was married, in June 1654, to Mrs. Hannah Pantry;<sup>(c)</sup> and that he died in 1668, or about that time. He remained proprietor but a short time.

On the 28th of February, 1666, two days after the date of his deed from Blackleach, Thomas Welles conveyed the lot, by deed, to ELIEZUR WAY;<sup>(d)</sup> who held it until his death. Administration was granted on his estate, on the 1st of September 1687, and an inventory of his property was made; but no distribution was effected until January 8th, 1696; when the land in question was, by agreement of the parties interested, distributed to EBENEZER WAY.<sup>(e)</sup>

This proprietor held it less than a year. On the 3d of October 1696, it was conveyed, by a deed of that date, executed by him and his wife Irene, (she joining with him to extinguish all future claim of dower) to ELIZABETH WILSON, of Hartford. The consideration specified in the deed is £150, current silver money of New-England. Annexed to this deed is the following clause, under the hand and seal of Mary Way, the mother of Ebenezer: "Mrs. Mary Way, to signify her free and voluntary consent to her son's alienating the housing<sup>(f)</sup> and land above demised, sub-

(a) 1 Hart. Town Rec. 106.

(b) Orig. Dist. 11.

(c) Orig. Dist. reversed.

(d) Orig. Dist. 64.

(e) 4 Hart. Prob. Rec. 133, 251, 2. 5 Hart. Prob. Rec. 225.

(f) The word "housing," which occurs frequently in our ancient records, it has been said, was used by our ancestors, as the plural of house. But this, I apprehend, is not strictly correct. It is rather *nomen collectivum*, and imports not simply two or more houses, but every structure of the house kind upon the lot. The word is analogous in its meaning to other words of a similar formation—*e. g.* bedding, carpeting, clothing, shipping, &c. "Housing" has now become obsolete; but it is not otherwise exceptionable.





scribeth and sealeth with her son, and thereby relinquisheth all her right, title and interest in said housing and land, howsoever derived.”(a) In this deed, the premises are described as abutting “Northerly on land of Ensign Zechariah Sanford, and Easterly on land of Samuel Spencer;” but these boundaries are in fact the same as those in the former conveyances, on the North and East; there having been, in the meantime, a corresponding change of ownership in the parcels of land referred to.

I am happy to have it in my power to give some account, though a concise one, of this proprietor. She was the daughter of John and Elizabeth Crow, before-mentioned, and of course, the grand-daughter of Elder Goodwin. Her first husband was William Warren of Hartford, by whom she had a daughter, who will be introduced to you presently. After his death, she became the wife of Phinehas Wilson, an eminent merchant from Dublin, settled in Hartford; and, at the date of the last-mentioned deed, she was his widow; he having died in May, 1692. She was a woman of business habits and of wealth; being one of the greatest land-holders, and probably the greatest money-lender, in the town. And she was careful to take good security: the town records of that period are filled with her mortgages. In January, 1725, she made her will, disposing of all her estate. Among her numerous legacies, was one of £40. to the poor widows in Hartford, to be distributed among them at the discretion of her executrix. She died, on the 19th of July, 1727, at the advanced age of eighty-seven, having been in possession of the land in question more than thirty years.

Mrs. Wilson, though she left many legatees—these she could make by a stroke of her pen—left but one child—the daughter just alluded to—at that time the estimable consort of the Rev. Timothy Woodbridge, pastor of the First Congregational Society in Hartford. To ABIGAIL WOODBRIDGE, and her heirs, forever, Mrs. Wilson devised the residue of her estate, after payment of the specific legacies, with cer-



tain limitations which it is not necessary to specify here ; and constituted her the sole executrix of her will. The inventory of Mrs. Wilson's estate, dated the 26th of July, 1727, contains the following clause : " The homestead and buildings thereon purchased of Way, £250." (") Mrs. Woodbridge, after her mother's death, thus became the proprietor of the estate in question, by an indisputable title ; and so continued until the transaction which I am about to state, took place.

This estate, from the time it was originally laid out, and allotted to Elder Goodwin, down to the time referred to—through all its changes of ownership, during a period but little short of a century—remained *entire*. A division is now to be effected. The Rev. Mr. Woodbridge died on the 30th of April, 1732 ; and the Rev. DANIEL WADSWORTH was ordained, on the 28th of September, 1732, as his successor in the ministry. Mrs. Woodbridge now has an opportunity to furnish her new minister, and the congregation under his charge, with eligible sites, one for a dwelling-house, the other for a meeting-house, from contiguous portions of land taken from the Elder Goodwin lot. Accordingly, she, on the 25th of June, 1733, executes two deeds, in the presence of the same witnesses, and acknowledges them before the same magistrate ; and so simultaneously are they to take effect, that the subject of each is described as it would be, if no conveyance of the other were made : *i. e.* the line constituting the Northern boundary of one lot and the Southern boundary of the other, is described as still bordering on her own land.

I will first take some notice of that conveying the meeting-house site.

The operative words of the deed are introduced with the following recital : " Whereas my honoured mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson, late of Hartford, deceased, in her life-time, did promise to give to God and the First Church and Society in Hartford, whereof the Rev. Mr. Daniel Wadsworth is now pastor, so much of that lot of land which



my said mother purchased of Mr. Ebenezer Way, lying in the town aforesaid, bounded North on land of the heirs of Zechariah Sanford, deceased, East on the land of John Austin, [now the owner of the original Stone lot] and South and West on the street, as would be needful and convenient to erect and build a house for attending the public worship of God ; which, nevertheless, my mother, in her life-time, did not make sure, by any instrument of conveyance ; and whereas the whole of the aforesaid lot of land, since the death of my said mother, has, by descent or otherwise, lawfully become the proper estate of inheritance of me, the said Abigail Woodbridge ; and being truly sensible of the desire and good intent of my said mother in and respecting the premises ; and also considering it as a duty to honour God with my substance, and to return to him and the church some part of that, which, in his kind providence, he hath given me ; and whereas the committee of the said Society hereafter in these presents named, have moved to me for a legal conveyance of so much of my aforesaid lot as may be sufficient for the use aforesaid." The deed then proceeds thus : " Know ye, therefore, that I, the said Abigail Woodbridge, for the considerations aforesaid, and for divers other good and weighty considerations me thereunto especially moving, have given and granted, and do, by these presents, give, grant, convey and confirm unto the Hon. Joseph Talcott Esq., Capt. Hezekiah Wyllis, Capt. Cyprian Nichols, Capt. John Sheldon, Dea. Thomas Richards, Mr. James Ensign, Mr. Samuel Catlin, Mr. John Edwards and Mr. Edward Cadwell, all of Hartford aforesaid, committee of the First Society aforesaid, and members of said Society, and to the rest of the members of said Society, to and for the use of the said Society, to build a house upon for the inhabitants of said Society to meet in and attend divine service and worship—one certain piece or parcel of land, being parcel of the lot above in these presents described and mentioned, containing in quantity 7842 square feet, (be it more or less.) beginning at the North-West corner thereof, at the street, on the West, at the Northernmost post of the







board-fence South of the gate opening into the barn-yard—and to extend Southerly, in the line where the fence now stands, seventy-nine feet; and from thence to run Eastward into the lot ninety-eight feet, and from thence running Northwardly, by a line parallel to the street, or first above described line, seventy-nine feet; and from thence to run Westward, ninety-eight feet, to the first above-mentioned North-West corner: being in form of a parallelogram or oblong square; bounded West on the street, and every other way on mine own land.” Then follow the *habendum*, covenants, &c. in the usual form. (a)

The land described in this deed, is, with some changes in its limits, the lot which is now owned by Charles Brainerd, and which was so long the residence of the Rev. Dr. Strong. The Society held it but a little more than four years. In May 1737, the General Assembly established another place as the site of the new meeting-house, viz. “the South-East part of the burying lot in Hartford, with part of Capt. Nathaniel Hooker’s lot adjoining thereto;” (b) so that the land granted by Mrs. Woodbridge, was not needed for that purpose; and the society, at a meeting held on the 1st of August 1737, authorized their committee to execute to her a release deed of such land; which, on the 7th of October following, was accordingly done. (c)

In the other deed, the grantee is described as “Daniel Wadsworth, late of Farmington, now of Hartford;” the consideration stated therein, is, “£100 in money;” and the description of the premises is as follows: “One certain piece of land lying in Hartford, containing one acre, being part of the lot formerly belonging unto Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson, and by her bought of Ebenezer Way, which acre of land is butted and bounded, Easterly with land belonging unto Mr. John Austin, Westerly with a highway, Northerly with land belonging to Mr. Samuel Flagg, [father of the late Dr. Flagg of East-Hartford, who had become the

(a) 1 Hart. Rec. of Deeds, 126.

(b) 6 Col. Rec., 310.

(c) 6 Hart. Rec. of Deeds, 335,6.



owner of the original Steele lot,] and Southerly with land belonging to the said Abigail Woodbridge"—[i. e. the land conveyed by the first-mentioned deed.] (")

The grantee under this deed went into immediate possession of the land, and erected thereon a dwelling-house, in which he spent the remainder of his life.

Before we proceed with our history, let us take leave of the late proprietor, by a short notice of her. She was a great-grand daughter of Elder Goodwin; and was born in the year 1676 or 1677. Her parents appear to have been respectable, but in moderate circumstances; though her mother, as we have seen, eventually became wealthy. In January, 1692, Miss Warren, at the early age of sixteen, was married to Richard Lord, then a young man of twenty-three, the only child of Richard Lord, a merchant of great wealth and some political consideration, being a member of the Upper House. Her husband died in 1712, leaving three or four children by her, and a large estate. The Rev. Timothy Woodbridge, the respected and beloved pastor of the First Society, then a widower, was so fortunate as to contract an alliance with this lady, who was still young, and as rich in moral worth as in worldly estate. Her second husband died in April, 1732. She survived him until January 1, 1754; when she was buried by the side of her first husband, the companion of her youth. Among her known benefactions, during her long life, it may not be improper to mention the gift of a bell to Yale-College, in 1723—the first that ever broke the morning slumbers of a student in that institution. (b)

The Rev. Daniel Wadsworth was the great-grand-son of William Wadsworth, one of the first settlers of Hartford. John Wadsworth, the eldest son of William, and brother of Joseph of charter memory, settled at Farmington, and was an Assistant or member of the Upper House, from 1680 until Sir Edmond Andross took into his hands the govern-

(a) 5 *Hart. Rec. of Deeds*, 521, 2.

(b) *Baldwin's Annals of Yale College*, 308.



ment of the Colony. He was sitting at the Council Board, when his disloyal brother abstracted the charter. His second son, also named John, married Mrs. Sarah Gridley. They had two sons, John and Daniel, and four daughters. Daniel, the subject of our present notice, was born at Farmington, in the year 1704 or 1705. He was educated at Yale-College, and graduated there in 1726. He was a member of the corporation of that institution, from 1743 until his death. In February, 1734, he married Miss Abigail Talcott, daughter of Gov. Joseph Talcott. He died, greatly respected, on the 12th of November 1747, in the prime of life and in the midst of his usefulness, leaving a widow and six children, viz. two sons,—Daniel and JEREMIAH, and four daughters,—Abigail, EUNICE, ELIZABETH and Ruth. In the inventory of his estate, his "house and homestead" are appraised at £2000.<sup>(a)</sup>

By his will, dated December 19th, 1746, and a codicil, dated October 3d, 1747, he disposed of his estate, giving to his wife one-third part of his personal estate forever, and the use and improvement of one-half of his homelot, dwelling-house, barn and well, during her natural life.<sup>(b)</sup> It is not necessary for our present purpose to specify the provision made by the testator for each of his children; for, on the 10th of August, 1765, after the death of Daniel and Ruth, the survivors entered into a mutual agreement, under their hands and seals, for the settlement of their father's estate, which was exhibited to and approved by the court of probate.<sup>(c)</sup> By this arrangement, Jeremiah, Eunice and Elizabeth, each, became the proprietor in fee, of one full third part of the mansion house and lot in question, subject, of course, to the life estate of their mother in one half. Abigail, the other surviving sister, was provided for, by other estate equivalent in value. In the instrument referred to, the premises are thus described: "The mansion house and lot in Hartford, containing one acre, bounded North on the

(a) 15 *Hart. Prob. Rec.* 321.

(b) 15 *Hart. Prob. Rec.* 238, 9.

(c) 21 *Hart. Prob. Rec.* 311 & seq.





heirs of Samuel Flagg, late of said Hartford, deceased; West, on the Main-street; South on land belonging to George Lord [the grantee of John Haynes Lord, who was the grandson of Mrs. Woodbridge;] and East on land belonging to the heirs of John Ellery, deceased." John Ellery was the grandson of John Austin, the former owner of the last-mentioned land, and took it by devise from him, after the death of his widow and daughter, the devisees for life. (°)

On the 28th of June, 1773, Mrs. Abigail Wadsworth died; and thus her life-estate in the homestead became extinct.

By a release deed, dated the 30th of December, 1797, Jeremiah Wadsworth, in consideration of twenty dollars and an exchange of lands, conveyed to his sisters Eunice and Elizabeth all his right in the homestead, to extend from the front on Main-street as far East as the fence which ran North and South and divided the land as it was then occupied, between him and his son, DANIEL WADSWORTH. (°) Eunice and Elizabeth Wadsworth, on the same day, and as part of the same arrangement, conveyed to their brother Jeremiah all their right in that part of the homestead which lay East of the garden fence. (°) By a deed of indenture of the same date, they then leased to him the West part of the homestead, for the term of his natural life;—to have and enjoy the same in common with the lessors, and them alone, without let or hindrance; he paying the reasonable rent of one pepper-corn annually, on the first Monday of May in each year, during said term. (°) Col. Wadsworth spent the remainder of his days in a *hired* house.

He had no longer any title, except as lessee, to that part of the homestead, which lay West of the garden fence; but he had become the sole and absolute owner of that part which lay East of this fence, and was also the sole proprietor of other land adjoining thereto on the West side of Prospect street, which he had bought of Joseph Hart and his

(a) See the will of John Austin, dated February 19th, 1842, 14 *Hart. Prob. Rec.* 92. and the will of John Ellery, dated April 7th, 1764, 19 *Hart. Prob. Rec.* 200.

(b) 21 *Hart. Rec. Deeds*, 617.

(c) *Id.* 618

(d) *Id.* 619.





wife Eunice.<sup>(a)</sup> She was the daughter of John Ellery, and took the last-mentioned land by devise from him.<sup>(b)</sup>

By will, dated October 30th, 1799, Col. Wadsworth devised to his son Daniel Wadsworth, the land, house, and other buildings where the devisee then lived, and now lives, bounded Easterly by Prospect street; Southerly, by land in possession of the Rev. Nathan Strong; Westerly, by land of Eunice and Elizabeth Wadsworth, divided by an open fence; and Northerly, by an alley.<sup>(c)</sup>

On the 8th of August, 1803, Eunice and Elizabeth Wadsworth made their wills respectively, each giving to the other, the use of all her real estate, during the life of the devisee, and such estate in fee, after her decease, to her nephew, Daniel Wadsworth, and her niece, Catharine Terry. The testatrix then provided, that whatever right she might have in "our mansion house and the land there-to adjoining," should be vested in said Daniel, subject to a condition which it is not necessary to specify, as all that the condition required has long since been done.<sup>(d)</sup> Elizabeth Wadsworth died on the 15th of November, 1810, and Eunice, on the 23d of July, 1825. Daniel Wadsworth thus became vested with an absolute title to the homestead West of the fence. Having previously taken the land between the fence and Prospect-street, as we have seen, by devise from his father, a perfect title was now vested in him to all the land between Main-street on the West, and Prospect-street on the East.

For a notice of Eunice and Elizabeth Wadsworth, I am indebted to one intimately acquainted with them. They were born at Hartford; the former, on the 31st of August, 1736, the latter, on the 19th of July, 1738. Heartfelt piety and an integrity that influenced every word and action, were the foundation of those virtues which distinguished them through life. Respect for the institutions and minis-

(a) 17 *Hart. Rec. Deeds*, 231.

(b) See the will of John Ellery, before referred to.

(c) 27 *Hart. Prob. Rec.* 144. 213.

(d) 29 *Id.* 296, 7. 35 *Id.* 161, 2.



ters of religion, sacred regard for the Sabbath, and love of God's holy temple, were mingled with an industrious improvement of time, fond affection for those connected with them by kindred blood, and warm sympathy in the woes of others, which age did not quench, and which might be seen in the moistened eye, whenever any tale of human suffering met the ear. Of these sisters it may be emphatically said, "the memory of the just is blessed." (a)

The life of Jeremiah Wadsworth is yet to be written. The biography of this distinguished man, if properly executed, would be replete with interest and instruction. All that I propose to do, on the present occasion, is, to glance at a few of the prominent events of his life.

He was born at Hartford, on the 12th of July, 1743. His father died when he was but a little more than four years old. Tradition says of him, that in his early youth, he was inclined to action and sport, rather than to study. While he was yet of a tender age, his mother placed him under the care and in the service of her brother, Matthew Talcott, Esq., a merchant in Middletown, extensively concerned in navigation. When he was about eighteen years of age, he was taken with spitting blood; and his flesh began to waste away. Under these circumstances, he, by the advice of his friends, readily accepted the place of a seaman before the mast, in one of his uncle's vessels. Here he soon recovered his health. After several voyages—generally short ones—in this capacity, he became, first the mate, and afterwards the master, of a vessel. He was thus at sea at least ten years. Faithful and efficient in his business, he won the confidence and esteem of his employer, and of all who had dealings with him.

During the latter part of this period, he married Miss Mehitabel Russell, daughter of the Rev. William Russell of Middletown. After his mother's death in 1773, he, with his family—a wife and three children—removed to Hartford, and occupied, in common with his sisters, the paternal mansion house.

(a) Mrs. Sigourney.



The revolutionary war, which commenced when he was about thirty two years old, deprived him of his employment at sea. But he had become too much a man of business to be idle. It was seen, that his experience and tact in buying and selling cargoes, might be turned to a profitable account—profitable to his country as well as to himself—in furnishing supplies for the army. He was offered the place of deputy-commissary under Col. Joseph Trumbull, which he accepted; and so satisfactorily did he execute its duties, that on the resignation of his principal, not long afterwards, he was appointed, by Congress, as his successor in office. After the arrival of the French troops, he became commissary of the French army, and acted in that capacity until the close of the war.

His official situation, his knowledge of the country and its resources, his insight into the characters and motives of men, and his sound common sense on all subjects, rendered it useful, not to say necessary, for the principal officers of the American and French army to hold frequent consultations with him. He shared largely in their confidence—especially in that of the commander-in-chief. Hence they were often his guests; and his house was always open to them. The following apostrophe to this house after its removal, is not less authentic as a record of historical facts, than its diction is graceful:

“ Fallen dome—beloved so well,  
Thou could'st many a legend tell  
Of the chiefs of ancient fame,  
Who, to share thy shelter, came.  
*Rochambeau* and *La Fayette*  
Round thy plenteous board have met,  
With Columbia's mightier son,  
Great and glorious WASHINGTON.  
Here, with kindred minds, they plann'd  
Rescue for an infant land;  
While the British lion's roar  
Echo'd round the leagur'd shore.” (a)







Let me add, in my own plain prose, that General Washington was enjoying the hospitality of this house, with Count de Rochambeau, at the time Arnold was perpetrating treason at West Point, and returned to take a hasty breakfast at the traitor's table, an hour after he had fled from it, and immediately before the discovery of his guilt.<sup>(a)</sup>

In July, 1783, after the cessation of hostilities, and a few weeks before the treaty of peace was signed, Col. Wadsworth embarked for France, for the purpose of rendering an account of his administration to the proper officers of the French government, and obtaining a final settlement with them. He arrived in France, in August, after a passage of twenty-seven days. So correctly had his accounts been kept, and so satisfactory had his official conduct been, that a settlement was effected without difficulty; and the large balance in his favour was honourably paid. In the latter part of March, 1784, he left France, and passed over to England, where he remained until some time in July following. Thence he went to Ireland, where he spent about six weeks; and then returned to America. He arrived in Delaware Bay, after a passage of fifty-six days.

A considerable part of the funds he received from the French government he invested in French, English and Irish goods, which he brought home and sold in Hartford and Philadelphia. This, with the care and management of his other property, afforded him sufficient employment in the way of business, without trenching upon his social and domestic enjoyments.

During this period, he caused some improvements in the agriculture of his neighbourhood, by successful experiments on his own land. He also introduced into the state breeds both of horses and horned cattle, superior to those which had been previously raised here.

When the constitution of the United States was referred to the people of the several states for their consideration, he was elected a member of the convention of this state

(a) Sparks' Life of Arnold, *passim*.



from his native town, and not only took a deep interest in its proceedings, but largely shared its labours and responsibilities. Though his education and habits had not especially fitted him for public debate, yet his natural good sense surmounted every difficulty of this sort, and he became an efficient advocate of the constitution. After its adoption, he was elected a member of the first Congress, with such men as Roger Sherman, Jonathan Trumbull, and others, for his colleagues. He was re-elected to the second Congress, and afterwards to the third. After serving his state and country, in this capacity, for six years, he resigned his seat, or declined a further election. In May, 1795, the next session of the General Assembly of this state after the expiration of the third Congress, he was chosen a representative of his native town in the popular branch, and was, at the same time, elected, by the freemen of the state, an Assistant or member of the Council. He took his seat in the latter body; and was annually re-elected to that station until 1801, when, at his own request, he was omitted. He died on the 30th of April 1804, leaving a widow and two children—a son and a daughter.

I have not time, if I had the requisite materials and qualifications, for a full delineation of his character. It may be sufficient for the present occasion, to mention a few characteristic qualities, which those who knew him best, love to cherish in their memories. To a sunny cheerfulness of temper, he united very vivid recollections of past events, combining important historical truths with pleasant anecdotes; and these he related so well as to entertain and delight his hearers. He was a most firm friend; and to those whom he loved, his generosity was unbounded; whilst his firmness and integrity kept at bay the inquisitive and the intriguing. He gave encouragement to industrious people, by advice, and when their necessities required it, by pecuniary assistance. No man since the days of Job, could, with more truthfulness, appropriate his declaration—"I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not, I searched out." Col. Humphreys, than whom few



had better opportunities of knowing him, says—"He was always the protector and the guardian of the widow, the fatherless and the distressed." In relation to his public character, the same distinguished witness testifies as follows: "No man in this country was ever better acquainted with its resources, or the best mode of drawing them forth for the public use. His talents for and dispatch of business, were unrivalled. His services, at some periods of the war, were incalculable."<sup>(a)</sup>

M. De Warville, a respectable French gentleman, who travelled in this country in 1788, thus speaks of him: "Hartford is the residence of one of the most respectable men in the United States—Colonel Wadsworth. He enjoys a considerable fortune, which he owes entirely to his own labour and industry. Perfectly versed in commerce and agriculture; universally known for the service he rendered the American and French armies during the war; generally esteemed and beloved for his great virtues; he crowns all his qualities, by an amiable and singular modesty. His address is frank, his countenance open, and his discourse simple. Thus you cannot fail to love him, as soon as you see him."<sup>(b)</sup>

I will conclude this imperfect sketch, by adopting the general summary, which appeared in one of the public prints of this city,<sup>(c)</sup> immediately after his decease: "In all the public and private relations of life, he was esteemed and respected. By his death, his family have lost a tender, affectionate and beloved relative; the poor a kind and beneficent father; the town its greatest benefactor; and the country one of its firmest friends, and most able and faithful patriots."

Daniel Wadsworth, after the decease of the survivor of his aunts, occupied the homestead of his ancestors, as well as the adjoining land on the East, until the spring of 1842.

(a) Valedictory Discourse before the Connecticut Society of Cincinnati, July 4th, 1804, pp. 11, 38.

(b) New Travels in the United States of America, performed in 1788, by J. P. Brissot De Warville. Translated from the French. London, 1792.

(c) The Connecticut Courant of May 2d, 1804.





Of this gentleman, as he is living, my notice will be brief. His genealogy in the paternal line, has already been traced as far back as William Wadsworth; (a) and it might easily be carried farther back, by crossing the Atlantic. I now have occasion to advert more particularly to his ancestry, in the *maternal* line. At the close of my notice of Elder William Goodwin, I spoke of his blood as not yet extinct. Here it is pertinent to state the curious and interesting fact, that the last individual proprietor of the land in question, is a *lineal descendant* of the first proprietor in severalty; and if that "godly man" is now in a situation to know what has become of that portion of earth, which, two hundred years ago, constituted the rear of his homestead, lying on the North side of the riveret in Hartford, he may well, at this hour, look down upon it, and upon his offspring of the sixth generation, with some degree of complacency. It has been stated, as you may recollect, that Elder Goodwin left a daughter, Elizabeth, an only child, who married John Crow. (b) By him she had several children, and among

(a) William Wadsworth, the younger brother of James, was born in Long-Buckby, Northamptonshire, England; removed thence to Braintree in Essex; emigrated thence, with his family, to New-England, and was admitted a free-man of Massachusetts, simultaneously with William Goodwin and others, November 6th, 1632. He came to Hartford, either in the Fall of 1635, or the Spring of 1636. [I intended to insert here a complete list of the descendants of William Wadsworth,—at least those in the male line—and have taken some pains to collect the materials requisite for that purpose; but the collection is still so incomplete, that I must defer the accomplishment of my design to a future occasion, or leave it wholly to some other hand.]

(b) For the following account of the descendants of John Crow, the son-in-law of Elder William Goodwin, I am indebted to *Nathaniel Goodwin, Esq.* of Hartford, one of our most accurate, as well as diligent, antiquarians. The facts and dates are mostly taken from public records, which he examined, and in part transcribed for my inspection.

#### CHILDREN OF JOHN CROW.

*John*, who was engaged in trade and lived at Fairfield. He perished at sea, in 1667, and left no family.

*Daniel*, settled in East Hartford.

*Nathaniel*, do.

*Samuel*, lived and died at Hadley.

*Esther*, married Giles Hamlin, of Middletown.



them a daughter, Esther, who married Giles Hamlin, a merchant of extensive business in Middletown. A daughter of his married the Rev. Noadiah Russell of Middletown;

*Hannah*, married Thomas Dickinson, of Hadley.

*Mehitabel*, " Samuel Partridge, of Hadley and Hatfield.

*Elizabeth*, " William Warren, of East-Hartford,—afterwards Phin. Wilson.

*Mary*, " Noah Coleman, of Hadley.

*Sarah*, " Daniel White, of Hatfield.

*Ruth*, " William Gaylord, of Hadley.

Elder Goodwin and his son-in-law, Mr. Crow, removed to Hadley, in 1659.

At the commencement of the Indian wars, Elder Goodwin, being in advanced life, returned to Connecticut, and located himself at Farmington, where he remained until his death, which occurred on the 11th of March, 1673. His wife, whose name was Susannah, died there, May 17, 1676. John Crow and wife disposed of Elder Goodwin's house and lands in Hadley, after his decease.

Giles Hamlin, of Middletown, was married to Esther Crow, daughter of John Crow, in the early part of the year 1655. They had children, as follows, viz :

Esther,	born	December	15,	1655.
John,	"	December	14,	1658.
Mary,	"	February	11,	1662.
Mehitabel,	"	November	17,	1664.
Giles,	"	August	13,	1666.
William,	"	February	3,	1667.

Giles Hamlin, died September 1, 1659, aged 67.

Esther Hamlin, relict of Giles Hamlin, died August 23, 1700.

Giles Hamlin had a home-lot of five acres, in Middletown, lying next south of the ancient burying-ground, bounded east by Connecticut River, west by highway, and south by his wife's grandfather, Elder William Goodwin. He was extensively engaged in foreign commerce, in which pursuit he seems to have amassed a large estate. He was also engaged in foreign trade, with John Crow, jun., his brother-in-law, who resided at Fairfield, and, as the records of the court of probate at Hartford show, settled an administration account on Mr. Crow's estate, at said court, on the 3d of March, 1687. Mr. John Crow, jun., as before mentioned, was lost at sea, in 1667. He was in large business, at the time of his decease; and being so suddenly removed, it required a long time to bring his concerns to a close. After the settlement of his estate, there remained a balance for distribution, which was distributed among his brothers and sisters.

The Rev. Noadiah Russell and Miss Mary Hamlin, daughter of Giles Hamlin, were joined in marriage covenant, Feb. 20th, 1690. They had children born as follows, viz.:

William, November 30, 1690.

Noadiah, August 8, 1692.



and his son, the Rev. William Russell, who succeeded his father in the ministry, was the father of Mehitabel, who became the wife of Jeremiah, and the mother of Daniel, Wadsworth. The latter gentleman, the only son of his parents that survived infancy, was born at Middletown, August 8th, 1771.

When he was between two and three years old, he removed, with his parents, to Hartford, where he has ever since resided. In 1783, he accompanied his father to France, England and Ireland, where he had favourable opportunities of cultivating and refining his natural taste for the fine arts—especially architecture, drawing and painting; and young as he then was, he was not too young to profit by his advantages. On the 26th of June, 1794, he was married to Miss Faith Trumbull, eldest daughter of Jonathan Trumbull, the second governor of that name. Uniformly and firmly declining office, (unless it were one of charity,) his life has been that of a *private gentleman*. How much he has done to adorn and illustrate such a life, may be more appropriately told, on a future occasion. Distant be the day when that occasion shall arrive!

In the summer or autumn of 1841, Mr. Wadsworth offered to the citizens of Hartford, as much of his ancestral homestead as would be requisite for a building for certain purposes which will soon be specified, provided they would raise, by subscription, the necessary means of erecting it. This offer was gladly embraced; and somewhat over 20,000

Giles,	November 8,	1693.	Died January 13, 1712.
Mary,	December 30,	1694.	Died February 27, 1723.
John,	July 6,	1697.	
Esther,	August 14,	1699.	Died,—(no date in the record.)
Daniel,	June 3,	1702.	
Mehitabel,	May 27,	1704.	
Hannah,	February 23,	1706.	

Rev. Noadiah Russell died December 3, 1713.

Esther Hamlin, the daughter of Giles Hamlin, senior, was married to William Southmayd, in October, 1673. She died December 29, 1682.

John Hamlin, the son of Giles Hamlin, senior, was married to Elizabeth Partridge, of Hatfield, at Hatfield, May 3, 1709. He died in the island of Antigua, on the 9th of August, 1709.





dollars was thus raised ; Mr. Wadsworth himself making the most liberal subscription. Considering the condition as sufficiently complied with, he, on the 18th of March, 1842, conveyed, with the usual covenants, to Thomas S. Williams and Alfred Smith, the land on Main-street lying between the alley on the North and the land of Charles Brainerd on the South, and extending Eastward about 172 feet to the East side of a gateway ; to be held by them in trust for a corporation to be created and organized, embracing, as members thereof, the subscribers for the fund intended for the erection of a building on the land so conveyed, in three principal divisions, separated from each other, by substantial partition walls, extending from the foundation to the roof, as a protection against fire : the central division to be appropriated and used for a gallery of the fine arts ; the North wing or division for a library, reading-room and other accommodations of the Hartford Young Men's Institute ; and the South wing or division for the Connecticut Historical Society, with authority to that society to allow or grant room or accommodations, in their division, for the use of the Natural History Society of Hartford, on such terms and to such extent, as the Historical Society should think proper. (a)

At the session of the General Assembly in May, 1842, the subscribers were created a corporation, by the name of WADSWORTH ATHENÆUM, with power to take from the trustees a conveyance of said land, with all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging, and to hold the same pursuant to the terms of said grant, and for the uses and purposes therein expressed and thereby intended.

At a meeting of the subscribers, legally held, on the 18th of June, 1842, the charter of incorporation was accepted ; and the corporation was duly organized under it. At the same time, the following gentlemen, previously designated by the subscribers, were appointed a committee to superintend the construction of the building, viz. *Alfred Smith, David Watkinson, James B. Hosmer, Gideon Welles, David*



*F. Robinson, Erastus Smith and Calvin Day.* Under their superintendence, the work, which had already been commenced, was carried on.

By a deed of release, dated November 25th, 1842, Thomas S. Williams and Alfred Smith conveyed to the corporation of Wadsworth Athenæum, and their successors, all such right and title as the grantors had in the premises, by virtue of the deed from Mr. Wadsworth to them. (")

We have thus traced the title of the land we occupy, through all its changes, from the sachem of Sukiauge to the corporation of Wadsworth Athenæum, with some notice of those through whose hands it has passed. In every instance, the title appears on the record, and that title is a perfectly legal one; so that if an exclusive and uninterrupted possession of those under whom we claim, for more than two hundred years, were of no avail, we could still vindicate our right to the soil, by authentic muniments, against all the world. Are we not then rightfully in possession? May not this institution well say, *Hæc mea sunt?*

Though unforeseen difficulties have retarded the completion of the building, it is now, though still in an unfinished state, fitted for our reception and partial accommodation.

The style of architecture is *castellated*, a modification of Gothic, which, in Europe, has been extensively used in the construction of defensive, household and collegiate buildings. The edifice is one hundred feet long, by seventy broad. In pursuance of the requirements of the grant and of the charter, the interior is in three nearly equal divisions, which are separated from cellar to roof, by substantial walls of masonry. Each of the three divisions is in two stories, besides the cellar or basement. The first story is about fourteen feet high, and divided into rooms, with stairways and halls. The second story is about twenty-five feet high, with a single room in each division, arched, and lighted by windows and sky-lights. The several divisions are appropriated to, and are to be fitted for, the purposes specified in the grant and charter.



How interesting are the historical associations which throng around that place ! ' How " beautiful for situation," too, is Wadsworth Athenæum ! No other site could be selected, combining so many and so great advantages. Its position is prominent, commanding. To the coming stranger and returning citizen, it presents its massive walls, its towers of strength and beauty, its mullioned windows and its wide-unfolding portals, welcoming their approach. It is central and easy of access, while it is sufficiently removed from unsafe or inconvenient contiguity to other structures. Its construction is admirably adapted to the purposes for which it is designed. It will be *permanent*.

History has inscribed on its tablet the name of Joseph Wadsworth, as a public benefactor, for preserving our colony charter, when rapacious power demanded its surrender, by hiding it in a hollow tree. That charter constituted the frame-work of our government, for a century and a half. But it has now become a dead letter ; the tooth of time has gnawed away its seal ; it exists only as an object of antiquarian curiosity. The charter-oak, after having flourished unknown ages with its companions of the primitive forest, has outlived them more than two centuries. The woodman's axe has spared that tree. It has escaped the ravages of fire ; and has withstood the assaults of hail, and snow, and vapour and stormy wind. Still Decay has exercised dominion over even the charter-oak. Some of its boughs have withered ; some of its branches have been broken off ; the heart of its trunk has mouldered into dust ; and the remnant of that trunk has ceased to chronicle on its wood the years of its life. But when all its boughs shall become withered like those of the fig tree in the gospel ; when all its branches shall be scathed as if by lightning ; when rottenness shall have eaten outward through the very rind of its trunk ; and when the charter-oak, like the charter itself, shall live only in history—those walls, those towers, those battlements, will endure, changeless as the perpetual hills. And when the achievement of Joseph Wadsworth shall be remembered no more, memorials of granite will commemorate the munificence of a distant relative, in a later age.

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